

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 01247 121753Z

46

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SCCT-01 SY-05 AID-05 DHA-02 ACDA-05

PC-01 /077 W

----- 113119

P R 121715Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 558

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 1247

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV ES

SUBJ: WHAT THERE IS OF A CAMPAIGN ENDS--ON A RELATIVELY QUIET NOTE

1. THE SIXTY-DAY PERIOD DURING WHICH POLITICAL PARTIES  
COULD CAMPAIGN FOR THE MARCH 14 ELECTIONS ENDED AT MIDNIGHT  
ON MARCH 10. THE HOURS REMAINING BEFORE THE ACTUAL VOTE  
TAKES PLACE WOULD APPEAR TO BE "BUSINESS AS USUAL" FOR THE  
COUNTRY, NOTWITHSTANDING SOME LAST MINUTE INCIDENTS AND  
POLITICAL MANEUVERS WHICH MOMENTARILY INCREASED THE LEVEL  
OF TENSIONS, AND PROGNOSTICATIONS OF TROUBLE AHEAD.

2. THE WEEK STARTED WITH A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS AND ATTEMPTED  
BOMBING, MOSTLY AGAINST GOVERNMENT POLITICAL PARTY PROPERTIES, IN  
THE CAPITAL AND SCATTERED CITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY. THE  
BIGGEST WAS AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WHICH CAUSED EXTENSIVE  
NON-STRUCTURAL DAMAGE TT THE PCN NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
IN SAN SALVADOR AT 2 A.M. MARCH 7. THE SAME NIGHT SAW  
SIMILAR ATTEMPTS ON OTHER INSTITUTIONS IDENTIFIED WITH THE  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 01247 121753Z

REGIME, INCLUDING ANOTHER THREE DEVICES PLANTED AT UCS

REGIONAL OFFICES (SEE SAN SALVADOR 1047). THE FOLLOWING EVENING, A LARGE EXPLOSION AGAIN ROCKED SAN SALVADOR. THIS TIME THE TARGET WAS A SMALL PRINT SHOP CONNECTED WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. (WHY THIS TARGET REMAINS A MYSTERY.) THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP) WAS REPORTED TO HAVE CLAIMED CREDIT FOR THE ATTACKS ON THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES. THE EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE AND NEWS OF THE EXPLOSIONS CREATED ANXIETY THAT THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF TERRORIST TACTICS TO DISRUPT THE ELECTIONS. SPOKESMEN FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND UNO, AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF SAN SALVADOR ALL DENOUNCED TERRORISM AS A POLITICAL WEAPON.

3. ON MARCH 9, AS EXPECTED THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CCE) OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED THE UNO THAT IT COULD NOT WITHDRAW FROM THE ELECTION. THE CCE'S ARGUMENTS WERE LEGALISTIC AND SLANTED. UNO WAS LEFT WITH ONLY ONE OPTION VIS A VIS THE ELECTION ITSELF, TO TRY AND GET THE MESSAGE OUT THAT ITS SUPPORTERS SHOULD BOYCOTT THE VOTE. FOR LEGAL REASONS, IT COULD ONLY ASK PEOPLE NOT TO VOTE FOR UNO CANDIDATES. THE PRINCIPAL EXPRESSION OF THIS EFFORT WAS A MASS RALLY IN DOWNTOWN SAN SALVADOR JUST BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN DEADLINE ENDED. THE IDEA WAS TO GET AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE IN THIS UNO STRONGHOLD TO ATTEND, AND BY NUMBERS ALONE PARALYZE THE CITY CENTER. WHILE THE RALLY DREW A SIZEABLE CROWD (POLOFF ESTIMATE OF 20-2,000), IT WAS SWELLED BY THE NORMAL RUSH HOUR CROWD AND WAS BARELY ENOUGH TO FILL THE PLAZA. COMMERCE IN THE SURROUNDING STREETS WAS VIRTUALLY UNAFFECTED. THE ORATORS, ALTHOUGH USING EXTREMELY STRONG LANGUAGE IN CONDEMNING THE "FASCISM" AND DICTATORSHIP OF THE MOLINA REGIME, DID NOT REALLY GALVANIZE THE CROWD. SECURITY FORCES WERE NOT IN EVIDENCE. THE LAST SPEAKER FINISHED AT 9:45, AND THE CROWD, DOWN TO SOME 15,000 SIMPLY AND QUIETLY DISPERSED THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE RALLY, FEW BANNERS. A NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE PRESENT DISTRIBUTING "SOLIDARITY" LITERATURE. THE POLOFF SENSED NO TENSION, LITTLE ANGER IN THE CROWD, ALTHOUGH THE MORE EFFECTIVE SPEAKERS' REMARKS WERE WELL RECEIVED AND APPLAUDED.

4. WHILE THE UNO WAS TRYING TO CONVINCE ITS FOLLOWERS IT  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 01247 121753Z

WAS OUT OF THE RACE, PRESIDENT MOLINA WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY SPEAKING ON TELEVISION EXHORTING THE POPULATION TO VOTE. HE ALSO ASSURED THE NATION THAT ITS SECURITY FORCES WOULD BE USED TO INSURE PEACEFUL ELECTIONS. THE TROOPS ARE ON "WHITE ALERT," A NORMAL GOVERNMENT PRE-ELECTION DAY PRECAUTION.

5. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY VIEWED THE UNO RALLY AS A LITMUS

TEST OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS. IF THE  
OPPOSITION COALITION HAD BEEN JOINED IN THE STREETS BY  
PROTESTING STUDENTS, LEFTIST UNIONS, OR OTHER SUCH  
GROUPS, THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INCIDENT, INTENTIONAL OR  
SPONTANEOUS, OBVIOUSLY INCREASED. NO ONE, HOWEVER,  
TRIED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CROWD OR ITS RESENTMENT.  
THE EMBASSY CANNOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOMEONE  
TRYING TO STAGE A SPECTAMULAR INCIDENT BETWEEN NOW AND  
POLLING TIME. WHILE ELECTION EVE AND THE FOLLOWING  
DAY WILL PROBABLY SEE SCATTERED VIOLENCE, PERHAPS EVEN  
MORE BOMBING, THE TEMPER OF THE COUNTRY AND OTHER  
EVIDENCE POINTS TO A RELATIVELY PEACEFUL SUNDAY.  
CAMPBELL

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** NATIONAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 12 MAR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** blochd0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976SANSAS01247  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760094-0586  
**From:** SAN SALVADOR  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760366/aaaacgco.tel  
**Line Count:** 130  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** blochd0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 JUL 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15 JUL 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <25 OCT 2004 by blochd0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** WHAT THERE IS OF A CAMPAIGN ENDS--ON A RELATIVELY QUIET NOTE  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, ES  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006